

Construction Begins on CGI-AMS Facility Which Will Bring More Than 300 Jobs to Region (May 2, 2006)

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN RICK BOUCHER

Groundbreaking for CGI-AMS Center of Excellence

Lebanon, Virginia

May 2, 2006

10:30 AM

I am pleased to join with Governor Kaine and Russell County and CGI-AMS officials today to break ground for the new CGI-AMS Center of Excellence in the Russell County Information Technology Park. Today marks a great success for Russell County and for Virginia's Ninth Congressional District.

CGI-AMS will invest \$6 million to open its doors in Russell County, building a facility over 50,000 square feet in size which is scheduled to be completed in the Spring of 2007. The facility will be the flagship Center of Excellence for CGI-AMS and will serve as a model for other such facilities nationwide.

Within 30 months, the company plans to create 300 software development jobs with an average salary of \$51,000. The company has already hired 36 new employees, some of whom have already begun working in the company's temporary facility in Lebanon. Most of these new employees have been hired from the region, and a small number have transferred from other CGI-AMS locations.

One of my highest priorities in representing Southwest Virginia is the provision of the infrastructure necessary for the region to attract technology-based companies such as CGI-AMS. The deployment of fiber optic cable, enabling the provision of high speed broadband Internet access, has been critical to the effort to bring information technology jobs to the region.

One year ago, many of us here today gathered to celebrate the lighting of the Cumberland Plateau fiber optic backbone, which enabled the provision of broadband services to the Russell County Information Technology Park. Using \$1.6 million in federal funds, which I worked to obtain from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration and a \$710,660 grant from the Virginia Tobacco Commission, the Bristol Virginia Utilities Board installed high bandwidth fiber from the Town of Abingdon along Route 19 into Russell County.

A number of partners have contributed significantly to the success we celebrate today. Officials of Russell County, the Town of Lebanon, the Russell County School System, and the Russell County Industrial Development Authority have formed a cooperative effort to bring new economic growth to the County. This partnership has proven effective in making Russell County attractive to businesses seeking new locations, and has continued to work to provide the infrastructure necessary to support the Center for Excellence. Currently, the Town of Lebanon is working to improve its water system by adding a new water tank to serve the CGI-AMS facility, and the Russell County School System has been working to implement programs which will prepare students for information technology jobs.

A larger region-wide effort has been launched to ensure that Russell County and Southwest Virginia have resources to support the needs of CGI-AMS and other information technology companies. The Virginia Department of Business Assistance is coordinating the efforts of local governments, legislative representatives, VCEDA, the Tobacco Commission, and the local four-year and community colleges to provide housing, infrastructure, cultural amenities, and educational opportunities that will meet the needs of the new employees.

I have mentioned that many partners are critical to the success of this project, and I would like to take a moment to recognize a number of individuals who have been instrumental to this effort.

I would like to thank Governor Kaine for his role in the success of this project as well as Secretary Gottschalk for his efforts to make this a successful venture for Southwest Virginia.

I would like to thank the Russell County Board of Supervisors and Chairman Danny Brown, as well as Mayor Tony Dodi and the Lebanon Town Council for their outstanding dedication to economic development. These individuals, ably aided by Russell County Administrator Jim Gillespie and Lebanon Town Manager Mike Duty, have demonstrated determination and persistence, and I want to commend them for their hard work.

I also want to express my thanks and my congratulations to the Russell County Industrial Development Authority and its Chairman Harry Rutherford. Harry and the Authority have a long history of success in recruiting industry to Russell County, and this project stands as another example of their outstanding work.

Allow me to recognize as well the exemplary assistance provided by the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission. Executive Director Andy Chafin and his excellent Staff devoted many hours to this project and I thank them for their efforts.

And I want to express my appreciation to Charles Yates, Executive Director of the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority, and his Board of Directors for their role in making today's celebration possible.

I also want to recognize Shannon Blevins with the Virginia Department of Business Assistance for her role in coordinating the region's efforts to ensure this project is successful.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Donna Morea, President of CGI-AMS to Russell County. I thank her for presenting to Russell County and to Southwest Virginia the opportunity to host this major investment and for creating hundreds of information technology jobs for the citizens of our region.

Today's celebration marks a great milestone in the efforts of many partners to bring high-paying, technology-related jobs to Southwest Virginia. I am pleased that CGI-AMS has recognized Russell County as the location for its Center of Excellence, and, with the support of this regional partnership, I look forward to similar celebrations in the future.

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